

The legislation being enacted today authorizes over \$150 million to create a new national center for research on minority health and health disparities at NIH, increases funding for research on race and health disparities at the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, and creates a new program to attract health disparity researchers into this critically important field. We must build on today's achievement by assuring adequate funding for these and other initiatives that will help close the health

status gap in this Nation. It will make a major contribution toward eliminating these disparities by 2010—a nationwide goal we established over 2 years ago and one which must be pursued with the same rigor with which we have worked towards eliminating barriers to basic civil rights.

NOTE: The "Health Care Fairness Act," S. 1880, approved November 22, was assigned Public Law No. 106-525.

Statement on Signing the Minority Health and Health Disparities Research and Education Act of 2000

November 22, 2000

Today I am pleased to sign into law S. 1880, the "Minority Health and Health Disparities Research and Education Act of 2000." This Act will enhance biomedical and behavioral research on minority health and health disparities, support medical training for minorities and others, and improve the study and collection of data regarding minorities and other populations.

This important legislation builds on the work of my Administration, particularly the efforts of the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS), Donna Shalala, to develop a truly national commitment to end disparities in health through research, training, and data gathering. Under Secretary Shalala, HHS committed to eliminate disparities in health by race and ethnicity by the year 2010. Eliminating disparities will require additional research and new approaches, but in the process of addressing the health needs of our most vulnerable populations, we will improve the Nation's health care system for everyone. This Act was made possible through the bipartisan efforts of the Congress; a multiracial coalition of leaders in public health, business, education, and charitable foundations; and my Administration.

The Act creates a National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). This Center will fund research programs on health disparities and minority health; support training of members of health disparity populations as researchers; and provide education loan relief for health professionals who commit themselves to perform

health disparities research. The Center will also coordinate all NIH research efforts in this area. The Center promises to help all Americans who bear the burden of health disparities regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, or geographic location.

This legislation also authorizes the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality to conduct and support activities and research to measure health disparities and identify causes and remedies. In addition, it authorizes the Health Resources and Services Administration to support research and demonstration projects to train health professionals on reducing health care disparities.

I would like to thank many individuals who helped develop and pass this landmark law, particularly Senators Kennedy, Frist, Jeffords, and Hatch, as well as Representatives Thompson, Lewis, Jackson, Jr., Watts, Norwood, Strickland, Brown, Bilirakis, Christensen, Towns, Rodriguez, Underwood, and Roybal-Allard. I also would like to acknowledge the diligent efforts of Secretary Shalala; David Satcher, the Surgeon General; Ruth Kirschstein, Principal Deputy Director of NIH; and the many others who worked tirelessly to bring this legislation forward.

The elimination of health disparities will require a comprehensive effort, involving both the Federal Government and the private sector. The Federal Government must continue to make measurable progress against diseases and conditions that are major contributors to health disparities, and our commitment to health disparities research must ensure that new knowledge

generated in federally supported laboratories and clinics benefits all of our citizens. We must also ensure that there is a diverse health care and research workforce in the future by making efforts to attract and train a generation of scientists and health care professionals who are

prepared to dedicate themselves to helping eliminate health disparities.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
November 22, 2000.

NOTE: S. 1880, approved November 22, was assigned Public Law No. 106–525.

Statement on Signing the Reports Consolidation Act of 2000 *November 22, 2000*

Today I am pleased to sign into law S. 2712, the “Reports Consolidation Act of 2000.” This Act, which passed with bipartisan support, provides permanent authority for Federal agencies to consolidate certain financial and performance reports into a single, comprehensive annual report.

This Act builds on the success of a pilot program started in 1994 and represents an important step in the maturity of financial management reporting by the Federal Government. An agency can now combine its audited financial statements, as required by the Chief Financial Officers Act, and its performance reports, re-

quired by the Government Performance and Results Act.

These new consolidated reports will give the American people a more comprehensive and useful picture of the many important services we provide to the Nation.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
November 22, 2000.

NOTE: S. 2712, approved November 22, was assigned Public Law No. 106–531.

Exchange With Reporters in Thurmont, Maryland *November 23, 2000*

Thanksgiving

The President. Hi, guys. Happy Thanksgiving.

Q. What are you thankful for, Mr. President?

The President. I have a lot to be thankful for this year. I’ve got my family here. They’re all in good health; they’re all doing well. I’ve got my two nephews here. I’m very grateful for how good the people of New York were to Hillary, and I’m very grateful the country’s in good shape. I’ve got a lot to be grateful for.

2000 Presidential Election

Q. Sir, do you think the Supreme Court will get involved in the Florida situation?

The President. I think the law on that is pretty clear, and there’s no point on my commenting on that. I don’t think I should comment about it.

Q. Thankful you’re not in this election this year? Wish you were?

The President. I think that the less I say about this right now, the better. I just want everybody who tried to vote—legally voted—to have their votes count, including the service people—everybody. I think that’s what they’re trying to do, and I hope there will be time to do it. I think that the position that I’ve taken on this all along is, we ought to just do the right thing and enfranchise everybody that could possibly